

**ICHLA Civil Rights Committee Meeting**  
**Indiana Government Center-South Conference RM 2**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**  
**1:30pm-3:00pm**  
**September 8, 2006**

**Committee Members:**

Maritza Robles, Committee Co-Chair / South Bend Community Schools  
Ruben Martí, Indiana State Police  
Bettye Dobkins, Indianapolis Police Department  
Azalea DeFord, Marion County Prosecutor's Office  
Colleen Kliever, Indianapolis Public Schools  
Angel Velez, Indiana Department of Correction/ICHLA Commissioner  
Minerva Fargas-Díaz, DWD / ICHLA Commissioner  
Lorena Alvarado Quezada, Mexican Consulate-Indianapolis  
Eréndira Quintero, Mexican Consulate-Indianapolis  
Elsa Villa, Mexican Consulate-Indianapolis  
Amelia Muñoz, MSW-Consultant

**Staff:**

Amy Mendoza, ICHLA Executive Director  
Laura Barrett, ICHLA Research

**I. Welcome**

Co-Chair Martiza Robles welcomed all committee members. She gave a brief overview of her position as Co-Chair. She is working in collaboration with the South Bend Police Department, where the population is in need of bilingual services. Co-Chair Robles acknowledged her opportunity to become a Co-Chair with Judge Gregory Kellam-Scott. She mentioned her recent meeting with Judge Scott that involved a mutual understanding of the issues to be addressed and Co-Chair duties. Unfortunately, Judge Scott was unable to attend this meeting; Co-Chair Robles chaired the meeting in his place.

Maritza Robles asked everyone to introduce themselves. All committee members present gave a brief introduction.

**II. Review of previous meeting minutes**

Co-Chair Robles asked Laura Barrett to review the previous meeting minutes.

Laura Barrett asked committee members to email her any corrections/additions regarding the minutes. She reminded everyone that the committee minutes are detailed oriented and often include quotations. All meetings will be recorded to assure accurate information retention.

Amy Mendoza encouraged committee members to review the minutes and grasp a better idea about the meeting discussion. She pointed out a bullet point list that was provided in the meeting packet; it contains comments from committee members about the major gang-related issues. She suggested that the committee recommend some sort of anti-gang piece of legislation or a model pilot program for the State of Indiana. These were the essential components that the committee members had mentioned at the previous meeting.

Co-Chair Robles asked Amy Mendoza and Laura Barrett to discuss their recent research found on anti-gang model programs from Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles and various other states. She also discussed the points of reference and asked committee members to determine a direction for the committee. She asked if the committee would like to focus their efforts in developing a state model program to share with other communities. Maritza Robles gave the committee an alternative option for the committee to concentrate on legislation. Those two things have benefits and disadvantages; it is a political issue. Co-Chair Robles said, "It depends on how we will present it and who will take our ideas." She also acknowledged that the committee must be careful about the type of model program the committee develops; it must be for other communities to adapt to. All areas of the state have different needs and they must be tailored.

### **III. Overview of state model programs (Chicago, Boston, Los Angeles, etc.)**

Amy Mendoza reminded committee members that the committee is not striving to get detailed recommendations by the end of the year. The committee will be continued until next year, as it will examine the different model programs identified and applied to both urban and rural counties. The committee should decide on a program, create a program or a piece of legislation, establish the committee's own standards or take pieces of other programs from other states and apply it to Indiana. Amy Mendoza said that the committee members are the specialists in the communities; they are responsible for sharing information in regards to what types of gangs are present in Indiana and identifying gang characteristics.

Amy Mendoza reviewed over the bullet points from the previous meeting that included issues/ideas with suppression, intervention and prevention in terms of Latino gangs.

Colleen Kliever asked if all committee comments were made public record.

Amy Mendoza explained that the Commission is a public entity and all of the committees are public entities as well. Both the meetings and minutes pertain to the rules of the public access laws. She mentioned that the minutes have been requested by various individuals in the past. "We don't quote everything in the minutes, but we do put a very general summary."... "We want to keep your comments and the committee going without losing information." "That is why we keep it as detailed as possible."

Co-Chair Robles asked for other questions/comments. She said, "It is clear in what we would like to accomplish today." She reminded members that the committee will continue to exist after this year.

Amy Mendoza discussed a report issued in January 2006 from the national organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Laura Barrett typed up a summary of this report that was included in the provided committee packet. The first part of the report identifies some programs that are going on in other states. One program was called "Operation Ceasefire" from Boston. Amy Mendoza explained that this program focused on gang intervention, prevention and suppression. A committee member from the previous meeting stated that "suppression is just a temporary bandaid."... "We need to address/try to address the root causes of why kids join gangs in general." Amy Mendoza stated that the executive summary of this report includes outlined steps reviewed in this report in terms of what methods/programs are presently working with gangs. She said that it sends a clear message that violence will no longer be tolerated and the importance that exists in terms of working with gangs that already exist. Amy Mendoza said that Captain Jim Zamora had previously mentioned a specialist in their unit who deals with gang issues and negotiates with gang members in an effort to stop a lot of the criminal activity. She acknowledged how this report addresses this specific issue.

Amy Mendoza mentioned the need for intensive support and services to keep high-risk youth out of trouble before they join gangs. Juvenile offenders do not have as many options opened up for them before they join gangs. This is a real issue and is a part of the problem. She expressed a need to address the issues that are related before it happens. Amy Mendoza reiterated that most of the crimes occur between 3:00pm-6:00pm. She also mentioned the most recent federal funding cuts for youth after-school programs and how the crime rate increased as a result. The main focus is to look at these model programs and look at what is being replicated in other states. The Boston model program has been successfully replicated and tailored to both the Chicago and Baton Rouge programs. This report explains some of the tactics of the programs. Amy Mendoza pointed out the mention of a "collaborative effort" on page 6 of the report. Step 1 reads: New learning on what works with gangs now. The city of Boston implemented a program called "Operation Ceasefire." The main focus of the program is a collaborative effort that uses law enforcement officials, youth educators and street mentors. The first step of this program is to send a clear message to the gang leaders; violence and crime will not be tolerated.

Laura Barrett explained that one of the tailored programs began in 1997. Boston's Operation Ceasefire started much earlier. Chicago's program is called Ceasefire. Despite the success of Boston's program, a lack of federal funding terminated its existence. Fortunately, Chicago's Ceasefire program still exists today. Laura Barrett suggested that the committee replicate a program in relation to Indiana's needs. Chicago's Ceasefire program is the closest in terms of Indiana's demographics; Northwest Indiana continues to consist of the majority of Indiana's major gang issues.

Laura Barrett acknowledged that The Fight Crime: Invest in Kids report stated, "Boston, Philadelphia and Baton Rouge have all reduced violent crimes through these methods." The programs have been very

successful. Laura Barrett also discussed an article from 2001 that mentioned a federal funding cut of 40% for after-school programs. The federal government is looking to cut the funding yet again by half. This is one of the major concerns. She addressed the hand-out about pre-kindergarten statistics in the State of Indiana called "Preventing Crime with Pre-Kindergarten: a Critical Investment in Indiana's Safety." She recommended that committee members visit the Fight Crime: Invest in Kids website. She directed the committee's attention to the second page of Indiana's Pre-Kindergarten statistics. The bar graph demonstrated that 71% of the many national law enforcement leaders interviewed, chose "provide more after-school and educational child care programs" over any other solution involving gang violence. The other solutions included the following statistics: Hire more police officers to investigate juvenile crimes-14.9%, prosecute more juveniles as adults-12.1% and install more metal detectors and cameras in schools-2.3%. Laura Barrett asked that the committee include these statistics in the final committee report.

Amy Mendoza said that the model program tweaked for all of these cities has withheld a main focus: A collaborative effort between law enforcement officials, educators, community leaders, religious leaders and federal law enforcement leaders. These individuals hold a meeting to establish a communication between all of the parties involved: a community based model. Amy Mendoza assured everyone that these models reflect the issues discussed by the committee members. She addressed the following bullet points from committee input:

- We must develop an anti-gang program that educates children and parents. Parents play a critical role.
- Schools must be trained to identify gang problems early on and include the educators into the discussion.
- There is a lack of main resources, i.e. cuts in federal funding.
- The Commission staff can research the cut in funding in relation to the rise in crime in Indiana.
- The program must address racial tensions. This is very important. Many groups are working on this issue with the adult population rather than the youth.
- The whole community has to be educated in various ways: How to spot gangs, health activities that children can engage in, make children feel welcome. Amy Mendoza said that committee member Byron Alston identified that kids join gangs because parents are not home; the gang becomes their family and they learn acceptance. There is a need to tackle the issue before it gets to this level.
- Students are in need of educational motivation and after-school programs
- The need to educate school staff and educators
- Develop a prevention-based model: It should also intervene and suppress all of issues. Amy Mendoza reminded the committee about recommending separate programs for prevention, suppression and intervention as an option. She also suggested that a program be recommended as a pilot program, an administrative change through the Indiana Criminal Justice Institute /the Indiana Department of Correction if possible, or as a legislative change. She explained how Byron Alston had also mentioned the need to keep schools open for after-school programs.
- Anticipate future gang aggressiveness. The patterns from Chicago and L.A. models address this issue.
- Must involve the Indiana Department of Education and the PTA
- Gang suppression is a temporary bandaid: The need for more intervention, suppression and prevention.

Amy Mendoza asked committee members to review over the provided report and recommendations. She asked that the committee analyze one of these programs or take pieces of these programs based on their comments. She would like to discuss the committee's program ideas at the next committee meeting. Amy Mendoza stated that both California and Illinois State Police have implemented new policing efforts based similar program models to Philadelphia. She briefly mentioned the research overview from the Commission staff. The last part of the report talks about after-school programs and the need for more funding for them.

Laura Barrett spoke about the Baton Rouge program and its success. The report stated, "The program had convinced judges in Baton Rouge to become more reliant on probation coupled with program, rather than sending these youthful offenders to facilities." These efforts not only affected the communities but have now reached the court systems. They are reliant on the community leaders rather than just facilities. The Baton Rouge program is more intensive than other programs. Laura Barrett encouraged all committee members to read through the report from Fight Crime: Invest in Kids. Laura Barrett stated that the report highlights the statistics and successes.

Amy Mendoza reviewed over the research brief called "Preventing Crime with Pre-Kindergarten: A Critical Investment in Indiana's Safety. It talks about the important role that pre-kindergarten plays and the lack of funding invested in the programs. The handout mentioned how quality pre-k cuts crime. The research brief

is tailored to Indiana statistics and discusses Chicago's program successes. Amy Mendoza quoted, "Research shows that similar children were 70 percent more likely to have been arrested for a violent crime by age 18 than those who attended the program." Amy Mendoza summarized how this statistical data should be implemented as a component of the committee's program recommendation. Parents need funding assistance to help pay for pre-kindergarten. This report addresses the need to help parents pay for those programs. The committee report must include a fiscal analysis: How much money the State will save, how much the programs will cost and how they will be implemented. Research shows that the funding cut is not the only barrier for minority enrollment in pre-kindergarten programs. Many parents do not have the resources or money to enroll their students in these expensive programs.

Amy Mendoza discussed the services denied to at-risk kids and mentioned the Head Start Program. She recently attended the National Council of La Raza's Annual Conference that presented national statistics about options that open up for kids who are not minority offenders, whereas, options for minority offenders are limited. Amy Mendoza mentioned the language often used by officers when dealing with juvenile offenders. Some officers have reportedly said, "We have a cell waiting for you." She expressed the need for law enforcement officers to be united. Amy Mendoza suggested that the committee should not recommend a program or an initiative unless the majority across the state is in favor of it. The committee must be sensitive with this topic and discuss programs with individuals from across the State of Indiana. Amy Mendoza recommended that the committee interview others and/or invite guest speakers to upcoming committee meetings for additional ideas/support.

Laura Barrett reminded the committee that the research brief called "Preventing Crime with Pre-Kindergarten: A Critical Investment in Indiana's Safety" is available online at Fright Crime: Invest in Kids. The statistics from this brief can be tailored to each individual state. Laura Barrett quoted a passage from the brief that read "At risk children without quality pre-kindergarten were 70% more likely to commit violent crimes." She also read, "Thirty-nine states provide voluntary pre-kindergarten, and some are considering funding universally available pre-kindergarten." Out of 39 states that provide pre-k, it did not mention whether or not Indiana provided some sort of voluntary pre-kindergarten.

Amy Mendoza discussed the recent hate crime incident mentioned at the last meeting that had occurred in Los Angeles. The provided article from Newsweek called "A Gang War with a Twist" clearly outlines this hate crime incident. It included an African-American man driving a van through a known Latino gang neighborhood. The African-American man was shot because of his race. The article goes into detail and questions the motive as either turf ownership, racial tensions or some kind of Latino gang initiative. Amy Mendoza asked committee members to keep this in mind as far as racial tensions. She would like this component to be included in the committee's recommendations.

Laura Barrett explained how California is looking to propose some sort of hate crime legislation. Indiana has nothing similar to this type of legislation; Indiana is currently lacking many anti-gang tactics legislation.

#### **IV. Key components of Indiana model programs**

Maritza Robles asked for committee input/ideas for an Indiana program that is based on the aforementioned program models.

Collen Kliewer discussed her experience in dealing with gang issues. She explained how many gangs have been influencing Indiana from other states. She said, "This is a very evolving matter, as current gangs are different from gangs 2-3 years ago." She also mentioned how the Norteños have become obsolete in Indiana and the Sureños and MS-13's have become more prominent. Gangs tend to take over each other over time. She explained the different levels of gangs.

Co-Chair Robles commented on how established gangs may move, allowing new arrivals to take over the area. In Elkhart, the Chamber of Commerce had recently recruited workers simply for the re-creation of industry in Mexico. She said that they did not talk to others about their families and schools. Co-Chair Robles felt that Elkhart was not ready for the problems that arose from this action. She said that the system is not large enough to absorb all of the needs. One must always look back and see what is happening.

Colleen Kliewer said that the Indianapolis schools are not prepared for gang issues. Other outside schools are now becoming more aware of the arising gang problem. Colleen Kliewer said that gang educators from IPD, IPS and others have been visiting the elementary schools where they get to know the kids and parents.

Colleen Kliewer said, "Those are investments that will pay off down the road." She is more effective since she works in all of the IPS schools. The students at these schools trust her and connect with her on a personal level. She expressed the importance of being able to "talk" to the kids. She said that the high schools have been more difficult to reach. Colleen Kliewer mentioned how Marilee Updike, IPS ENL Programs Coordinator has developed a pre-k program and has written various grants. She also mentioned racial tensions and how the worst of the worst gangs started out as kids simply gathering together to protect themselves from the racial discrimination that they faced. Colleen Kliewer stated that the gangs often start out small and innocent and then develop into serious matters.

Colleen Kliewer said that there are two different programs that were developed in the schools. The first program is called "Harmony Congress," where Patricia Payne from IPS is the Director. The whole idea of this program is to bring together all groups of children and separate them into their own cultural groups to talk about their values. These students are then brought together again to analyze the interests each group shares in common. She said that this has had a positive impact. The middle school had also experienced serious gang issues. Educators started the Sutton Academy in the middle schools where groups sat down together to talk to each other; they have made a video about this program. After they started the program, the incidents between African-American children and Latino children substantially decreased. All of the children started interacting with one another in a better atmosphere setting. Colleen Kliewer would like to encourage similar programs to exist throughout the state. Colleen Kliewer said, "These little gang issues can really grow into movements." She also mentioned that gangs from NY, Chicago and etc. states keep an eye on what is happening here in Indiana. These gangs may come to Indiana and take over smaller gang structures. Programs similar to the Harmony Congress and the Sutton Academy should be replicated into other classroom curriculums. She said, "What it will take is the will." She also said, "The willingness to see it is the problem and the willingness to do something about it is a problem." Colleen Kliewer concluded that it will take caring adults with a commitment to help these at-risk students.

Co-Chair Robles asked for commentary from the committee members representing the police and justice departments.

Deputy Dobkins said that there is a need to start with pre-k students and high-risk elementary students. She stated that St. Mary's Childcare Center is a perfect example. Deputy Dobkins expressed the importance of having police officers in the elementary schools. She said, "Once these kids get past 8 years old, there is not reaching out; it is almost impossible to change them." She said it is important to start when these children are very young.

Co-Chair Robles said that many years ago the South Bend School Corporation had asked her to find students to receive scholarships from the Community Foundation. She explained how there was money set aside to give away but there weren't adequate students to recommend. Co-Chair Robles has been working in the pre-school sector for 10-12 years. South Bend Community School Corporation has now developed an Early Childhood Center that is self-contained of all the Head Start Programs of St. Joseph County. She explained that this center also has other programs for the children with special needs. Co-Chair Robles said that she has seen kids at 4 years of age with a gang-related vocabulary that is not easily understood by adults. She said, "Those kids are already at risk." Co-Chair Robles felt that adults are sending a message that something is wrong. She said, "Something has to happen; we have to go back to that element." She also commented that "Our society is not put together to come from single mothers and single fathers; that is not the system in education."

Azalea DeFord said that everyone must focus on new children coming to the city. She would like to see individuals separate and analyze the challenges. She said, "Prevention in middle school or high school is not a waste of time." She mentioned the challenge that educators face with the limited funding. She said that there are two tiers. She stated that most of the Latinos are first generation with documentation problems, cultural barriers and limited resources. Azalea DeFord read that within the last three years, Latino births have increased by more than 22%.

Co-Chair Robles confirmed that there are two tiers: Prevention through education/pre-k and intervention.

Deputy Dobkins said that everything goes back to the family unit. She stated that the Mexican Consulate, IPD and several other agencies hosted education and prevention programs that were advertised on the Latino radio stations and etc. Unfortunately, the attendance at these program workshops was very little. She said

that this is a huge program that the IPD has developed; they recently sent two officers to Honduras to visit the prison gang activities. The Honduras resident gang expert also came to Indianapolis to train IPD officers. Deputy Dobkins also mentioned two DVD programs: One for police officers and one for the community. They still have a problem to get public awareness in attending these prevention programs. She acknowledged the assistance of the Mexican Consulate to help with trust issues.

Elsa Villa said that not a single person showed up to one of the program sessions; they were there by themselves. Elsa Villa said, "Education comes from the home." Parents often times do not accept that their own children are at-risk.

Co-Chair Robles asked Elsa Villa why she felt individuals did not attend.

Deputy Dobkins mentioned how it is typical of every culture to think "Not my children."

Elsa Villa said that they held these programs on the public's time; at 7 or 8pm or after dinner. She said that they often provided refreshments as well. She felt that many parents feel that it is the school's responsibility to deal with these issues. Elsa Villa also mentioned how parents might not understand that important education comes from the home. Many parents want to keep everything to the schools.

Elsa Villa said that the program was titled "Education and Prevention."

Amy Mendoza stated that the program specifically focused on the MS-13 gang.

Amelia Muñoz said that she has been working with tobacco control. She explained how she had difficulty attracting people to attend events that mentioned simply "tobacco control." Amelia Muñoz said that people want to attend events that are going to build themselves with positive results. She suggested the phrase "family building" to be used for a program. This will teach people the necessary information.

Azalea DeFord said that when she worked at IPS, the highest challenge was with high school students/parents, while the elementary students/parents had better success. She explained how Latinos distance themselves from police cars because of deportation fears.

Deputy Dobkins mentioned the good turn-out at Northwest High School that had over 50 adults in attendance for their educational program.

Laura Barrett asked why the attendance was more successful at this particular high school.

Deputy Dobkins said that they had help from organizations like La Plaza and the Hawthorne Community Center. She stated that the Hawthorne Community Center is also helping the IPD bring together the Latino community to start a crime watch, including neighborhood gang activities.

Lorena Alvarado stated that Latinos lack the support from their grandparents' traditional values because they are more than likely residing in another country. This family support structure is extremely important to Hispanic/Latino families. She said that often times, there is no family here to help them through such difficulties.

Co-Chair Robles said that kids have the power and they translate for their parents. She said, "Those parents trust those kids without no doubt, because the parents do not have the skills or understand the system." She said that the kids are thinking in Spanish and the parents are thinking in English; they lack a real communication. Co-Chair Robles felt that the first language was not developed with these kids and the second language was not developed with the parents. She said that now we have to have programs to communicate. She said that the staff of her bilingual department has to be the liaison between the child and the parent. Co-Chair Robles said that her most difficult part of raising children was dealing with the educational system. She did not have experience with the system as a parent; she only had experience as a director. She said that many educators do not understand the dynamics of the families. Many families experience their native culture at home and must adapt quickly to an American culture once they leave for school/work.

Amelia Muñoz mentioned Colorado's 50 Developmental Assets Program. This program included training for parents, faith communities and schools. This program was used as a tool used to help overcome school issues. She suggested that the committee research this program and develop something positive from it to assist in rebuilding families.

Azalea DeFord discussed the importance of multicultural mentoring, especially within schools. She suggested ideal target locations such as apartment complexes where they can offer positive community time. Many of the Hispanic families live in the same areas and are more community-oriented.

Deputy Dobkins said that they are doing a department-wide training of gangs. All IPD officers are required to attend these classes. She welcomed committee members to attend a class. Deputy Dobkins promised to contact committee members in regards to the training class schedules/dates. The training sessions will begin in late September 2006 and continue throughout October 2006.

Co-Chair Robles discussed the components of an Indiana program plan. She said that everyone has discussed many important ideas to be included on a recommendations list. She asked that committee members continue to model these ideas and understandings in their own communities. Co-Chair Robles mentioned plans to have a combined meeting with the ICHLA Education Committee and the Civil Rights Committee. Both committees are focusing on similar educational/program issues.

Amy Mendoza discussed the committee's key components: Pre-k programs that already exist, multicultural mentoring/programs and prevention and intervention techniques. She asked committee members to bring information/bullet point about the programs that already exist with their agency/department.

Co-Chair Robles asked committee members to compile a sketch of their active community or school programs/initiatives to be used as a point of discussion at the next committee meeting.

Colleen Kliwer said that IPS has done educational programs for many years. She felt that the most important part is forming that relationship with the parents; many say "It's not my kid." She stated that once a situation arises, parents are calling for help and seem to not know what to do. Colleen Kliwer would like to see the school systems work closely together with the police departments. She would like to see more educators/police form trusting relationships with students. She said, "Everything boils down to relationships."

Co-Chair Robles said that Americans are very time conscientious. Many Latinos feel that "el reloj camina" or "the clock walks." People must demonstrate that they truly care about each other. They have to make this feeling exist when working with students. She said that we have to be culturally aware of these differences. Co-Chair Robles asked all committee members to feel comfortable with one another in order to relate to their communities. The committee must be careful when identifying gang members regardless of their dress attire.

## **V. Next Steps**

Amy Mendoza asked committee members to work on identifying the programs that already exist within their organizations/departments.

Elsa Villa explained the Mexican Consulate's after school soccer (fútbol Americana) program called Project Hat Trick. They plan to have the first few meetings at the apartment complexes instead of just the football fields.

Co-Chair Robles said that she has been encouraging Hispanic/Latino children to play soccer at schools. Unfortunately, most of these children only choose to play in private community soccer leagues instead. She has also been trying to recruit parents to become soccer coaches. She informs these students that this is another opportunity to attend colleges/universities through sports scholarships.

Amy Mendoza asked Elsa Villa how long the Project Hat Trick pilot program plans to exist.

Elsa Villa hopes that the Project Hat Trick program will continue to exist throughout the years.

Co-Chair Robles asked Minerva Fargas-Diaz to bring any program information from Workforce Development (DWD). She would like to see DWD's perspective implemented into the committee's program recommendation.

Amy Mendoza asked committee members to send their perspectives of recommended program models via email. She also asked members to include their ideas on the needs of the program models. She mentioned that the committee report will also include an overview of Latino gangs in Indiana and the committee's input on a community-based program. The meeting minutes will be emailed to all committee members. Amy Mendoza also asked that committee members send their resources to the Commission staff to be included in the committee report.

Laura Barrett reminded committee members that the next meeting should be scheduled before the end of October so that a draft of the committee report can be submitted to the Commission by October's deadline. She recommended that the next committee meeting be held in early or mid-October.

Co-Chair Robles tentatively scheduled the next ICHLA Civil Rights Committee meeting for one of the following dates: Wednesday, October 4, 2006 at 1:30pm-3:00pm or Thursday, October 5, 2006 from 1:30pm-3:00pm. All details and meeting confirmations will be emailed to committee members within the near future.

The ICHLA Civil Rights Committee meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:10pm.